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28th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 6 October 1999, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Gurirab . . . . . (Namibia)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 109

Advancement of women

Draft resolution (A/54/L.4)

The President: Members will recall that at its 3rd plenary meeting, on 17 September 1999, the General Assembly decided that agenda item 109 would be considered directly in plenary meeting, for the sole purpose of taking action on the draft resolution entitled "Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women", which was recommended to the General Assembly for adoption by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1999/13 of 28 July 1999, on the understanding that this would not set a precedent. The draft resolution has been issued as document A/54/L.4.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/54/L.4, entitled "Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/54/L.4?

Draft resolution A/54/L.4 was adopted (resolution 54/4).

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 109.

Agenda item 37

Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development

Report of the Secretary-General (A/54/220)

Report of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and Further Initiatives (A/54/45 and Corr.1 and Add.1)

Draft decisions I, II and III (A/54/45, para. 71 and Corr.1); and IV (A/54/45/Add.1, para. 6)

The President: I should like to inform members that, in a letter dated 6 October 1999 addressed to the President of the General Assembly, the Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Western European and Other States for the month of October, requests that the General Assembly hear in plenary meeting a statement by the Observer of Switzerland on agenda item 37, "Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development".

Taking into account the importance attached to the issue under discussion, it is proposed that the General Assembly should take a decision on that request.

99-86059 (E)

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May I take it that there is no objection to the proposal to hear a statement by the Observer of Switzerland on this item?

It was so decided.

Mr. Insanally (Guyana): Less than a year from now, the special session of the General Assembly on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and further initiatives will be convened. Member States of the United Nations will then have the opportunity to assess the achievement of the goals set by the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action and to propose further measures for its implementation. It will also be an occasion on which Governments and the international community can recommit themselves to the enhancement of social development for the peoples of the world.

On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I would now like to speak of the particular social development concerns that we have and the ways and means by which they may be addressed.

At the outset, let me say that in an age which has witnessed outstanding scientific and technological progress, it is disquieting to see the rising number of people living in abject poverty. The eradication of poverty remains the foremost challenge for the developing world, where policy makers struggle on a daily basis to respond to the most basic needs of their peoples despite dwindling financial resources, disappointing economic growth rates and their countries' growing marginalization in the world's economy. For too many countries, the target of halving poverty by the year 2015 has proved elusive, and indeed, the President of the World Bank and the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) appear to have confirmed, at their recent meeting in Washington, that the goals which the international community had set itself for such important social services as health and housing will not be fulfilled as expected.

In the light of this pessimistic projection, the Group of 77 and China calls for a redoubled effort to arrest the rampant process of social degradation. We are convinced that people-centred development with an emphasis on poverty reduction, employment generation and social integration can lead to an improvement in the living conditions of the world's peoples. To be effective, however, poverty eradication strategies need to be holistic, multi-pronged and broad-based, paying particular attention to the needs of women and children, who constitute the majority of the world's poorest. Equally important, they must promote and incorporate policies for universal access to basic and primary education, improved literacy, increased life expectancy, reduced infant and maternal mortality rates and the achievement of levels of health that lead to socially and economically productive lives. Poverty eradication strategies must also address the social ills of unemployment and underemployment.

The goal of full employment for poverty reduction cannot be overemphasized. The Group of 77 reiterates its call for increased attention to be paid to employment expansion, particularly for women, youth, the disabled and older persons. Recognizing the important contribution of self-employment and the informal sector for the provision of employment opportunities, we would also advocate initiatives that encourage such enterprise. As studies have clearly shown, such forms of employment are of particular significance in times of economic difficulty, including those associated with structural adjustment programmes, when retrenchment is usually widespread and investment in the social sector is generally reduced. The informal sector and microcredit schemes have enabled the poor and other vulnerable social groups not only to sustain themselves but also to participate in development, thereby reducing the potential for social unrest.

If nothing else, our experience since 1995 has taught us that the achievement of social development goals set in Copenhagen will depend in large measure on sustained domestic growth and an enabling international environment. Developing countries need to be assured of a more level playing field for the marketing of their products and more favourable and fairer terms of trade. At the forthcoming World Trade Organization ministerial meeting in Seattle, and later, at the tenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in Bangkok, we must ensure that these needs are met.

Our high debt-servicing bills also remain a serious impediment to our future development. Admittedly, there have been several commendable initiatives, the latest being the Cologne initiative, which have effectively reduced the debt stock. Unfortunately, however, they are not nearly enough to relieve the burden faced by many developing countries. For the poorest of these, we must aim for debt cancellation, which alone can provide the breathing space necessary for recovery. We would also again urge an immediate reversal of the declining trend of official development assistance from the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of the gross national product of donor

countries and the creation of more incentives to encourage more capital flows and investments to developing countries.

As the financial crisis in Asia effectively demonstrated, globalization and liberalization of the world economy can be quite destructive, especially for weak economies. Sudden and widespread poverty, unemployment and homelessness can quickly sweep away decades of progress and economic development. It is worrying to note that the concern about the reliability of the prevailing financial architecture, which peaked when the crisis was full blown, appears to have dissipated almost completely. However, I believe that since the situation has not changed fundamentally, it would be foolish to be lulled into complacency. There is still an urgent need for greater macroeconomic vigilance to protect developing countries from the uncontrolled consequences which globalization has been known to bring.

In reviewing the Copenhagen commitments, we must be sensitive to the particular difficulties facing Africa, the least developed countries and small economies generally as they seek to respond to the social needs of their population. The deteriorating external economic environment has made it extremely difficult for those countries to address the structural deficiencies which inhibit their productivity and economic growth. Furthermore, many of them are prone to natural and other disasters which severely sap their ability to address social needs.

Thus far, the preparatory process for the special session has amply revealed the shortcomings in our efforts to reach the goals of the Social Summit. The Group of 77 and China looks forward to the timely issuance of the reports requested of the United Nations system during the first session of the Preparatory Committee, since they can provide an even clearer assessment of the magnitude of the obstacles encountered. As with the national reports and studies done at the regional level, the recommendations offered therein could serve as a basis for the active consideration of those issues by the Commission for Social Development when it meets next year. The Group is confident that the members of the Bureau of Preparatory Committee and the United Nations Division for Social Policy and Development, which have provided excellent leadership thus far in our preparations, will ensure that the review process is a productive one.

In concluding, let me emphasize our view that to succeed, the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action require a strong partnership among Governments, civil society and the international community. All stakeholders should contribute actively to the implementation of the Summit's commitments since all have an interest in securing a socially stable world.

Ms. Korpi (Finland): I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union on agenda item 37, entitled "Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development". The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries, Cyprus and Malta, as well as the European Free Trade Association countries members of the European Economic Area, Iceland and Liechtenstein, have expressed their wish to align themselves with this statement.

Almost five years have passed since heads of State and Government gathered in Copenhagen to recognize the significance of social development and human well-being for all and to give these goals the highest priority. They acknowledged the urgent need to address profound social problems, especially poverty, unemployment and social exclusion, that affect every country.

In June 2000 in Geneva, the Member States will meet again to reaffirm their commitment to the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. They will review and assess progress made regarding the implementation of the Copenhagen commitments and consider initiatives and actions to implement them further. Regarding the outcome of the special session, the European Union would welcome a substantive, balanced and concise political declaration. In respect of the review and appraisal, the agreed conclusions of the Commission for Social Development since the Summit should become part of the final outcome.

The European Union is fully committed to the preparatory process leading to the special session of the General Assembly in June 2000. It is our sincere wish to make that session a success. The European Union welcomes the progress made on many important issues during the inter-sessional informal consultations of the Preparatory Committee at the beginning of September. Much more clarity was achieved regarding the views of various negotiating groups. The European Union is pleased that it was possible to reach an agreement on the participation and accreditation of non-governmental organizations at the special session. The results of those informal consultations provide us with a good basis to continue the preparatory process.

There will be more information available and better understanding regarding the state of world social development and progress made since the Summit as soon as the national reports have been analysed by the Secretariat. The Summit has clearly had an impact on Government policies, as well as on United Nations and World Bank development activities. A preliminary assessment, however, indicates that despite some progress, much remains to be done.

The European Union welcomes the initiative, taken by the Council of Europe, to support the preparations for the special session in the European region by organizing, in cooperation with the Government of Ireland, a European meeting on social development. The meeting is being preceded by preparatory work focusing on the three main themes of the meeting: social integration, an enabling environment and poverty eradication. At the same time, the European Union hopes that the preparations for the European meeting will contribute to closer and better cooperation between the intergovernmental organizations that are active in the field of social development in Europe.

Since the Summit, changing trends in trade, new technologies and the process of globalization have offered new opportunities, but they have also created new challenges for the implementation of the Summit goals. Eradication of poverty remains an unmet goal. The challenge of eradicating poverty can, however, be met on the basis of a broad agreement reached among all actors since Copenhagen on appropriate strategies to reduce poverty. These include strengthening the financial and economic architecture at the macro level, while at the national level promoting explicit pro-poor policies, investment in basic social services, participatory strategies and the empowerment of women.

The ongoing discrimination against women in all societies concerning access to education and gainful employment must be given special attention.

Productive employment is a key element in eradicating poverty and in enhancing social integration. The overall issue of social integration, particularly universal access to social services, deserves more attention. In this context of social integration, the importance of families must be recognized. Therefore, policies in both developed and developing countries need to be formulated which ensure that livelihoods are sustained and vulnerability reduced generally. At the same time, these policies should give specific attention to groups with special needs, such as the long-term unemployed and young people. Also fundamental rights at work, as contained in the International Labour Organization (ILO) Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work adopted in June 1998 must be respected. Furthermore, the European Union encourages speedy ratification of the ILO Convention concerning the prohibition and immediate action for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, which was concluded this year.

Universal and lasting peace and sustainable development can be achieved only if they are based upon social justice. It is important to enhance the promotion of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy, good governance, participation by civil society, and equality between women and men. Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is also an essential prerequisite for social integration.

The implementation of the Copenhagen commitments and the preparatory process for the special session of the General Assembly is to be seen not in isolation, but in close relation to the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the other major United Nations conferences and summits, as well as other global negotiations such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) Millennium Round. Those conferences gave new impetus and new strength to international efforts in the fields of human rights, equality between men and women, social development, education, population policy, drugs and crime related issues, environment and sustainable development, trade and development, human settlements and food security. Those conferences and summits resulted in a challenging global agenda on the threshold of the new millennium.

There is broad agreement that Governments bear the primary responsibility for the implementation of these commitments. The international community, including United Nations system, plays an important role in assisting Governments to enhance their capacity to meet the challenges. It is clear, however, that only consistent, coherent and coordinated joint action will make it possible for the United Nations system to assist effectively in the implementation of the commitments made at the United Nations conferences and summits.

The Bretton Woods institutions are major global players in the economic and social field, and as such are important partners within the United Nations system. The European Union welcomes the World Bank's initiative on principles and good practices in social policy. We strongly support the view of the Bank's Development

Committee that further development of these principles would be best pursued within the broader framework of the United Nations system through cooperation between relevant agencies and the international financial institutions. The European Union will welcome positive discussion on these and related issues in the preparatory process leading up to the special session next year. We call for the process to continue with a view to establishing a framework of principles and good practices in social policy that would also take account of the need for flexibility in differing national situations. The European Union would also welcome strengthened cooperation within the multilateral system to share information on existing internationally developed standards and good practices in social policy and to make that information more easily accessible to all actors. The European Union shares the view that the social dimension should be integrated in all aspects of the multilateral system, including trade.

The European Union welcomes Economic and Social Council resolution 1999/55 on integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits. The contribution of the Economic and Social Council, especially the progress made on the issue of how to continue developing a limited number of common indicators for conference follow-up, was timely and welcome. This positive dialogue should now continue as a part of the Copenhagen + 5 process, thus making it possible both at the national and the international levels to better assess the progress made in the implementation of the Copenhagen commitments. One important element in this process is national capacity-building, which could include support for the authorities responsible for national monitoring and evaluation.

Effective implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action requires the strengthening of community organizations, non-governmental organizations and other relevant actors of civil society to enable them to participate effectively in the design, implementation and evaluation of social development policies, strategies and programmes. Governments play a crucial role in creating an enabling environment for civil-society participation, including the activities of volunteers. The European Union will continue to explore ways and means to promote active participation by representatives of employers' and workers' organizations in the work of the special session to be held in Geneva next year.

In the context of social development, issues of children and youth should not be overlooked. Poverty eradication, unemployment and social exclusion among young women and men are particularly important issues to be tackled, as they may have devastating effects on the social cohesion of societies and on the entire life span of an individual. Active participation by young people, and by the organizations representing them, in policy-making, especially on issues that have direct relevance to their lives, should be supported both at national and international levels.

Society must be organized in such a way that it can provide opportunities and security for all its members, thus allowing social cohesion to develop. This principle of being an actor, but also a beneficiary on an equal basis, applies particularly to persons with disabilities, indigenous people and groups with special needs. Special action based on the principle of non-discrimination is needed to ensure that these groups can live full and productive lives, have equal access to social services such as education and health care, and participate in the design and implementation of policies that affect their lives and development.

The European Union calls for a comprehensive approach to development, recognizing the primary responsibility and ownership of the Government. This approach should take into consideration not only the level of official development assistance, but also other elements such as good governance, trade, private investment, debt and transfer of technology. We reiterate that efforts should be strengthened towards the fulfilment of the official development assistance target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product by all donor countries, and we acknowledge that this will require a reversal in the downward trend of official development assistance overall. We would also encourage donor and recipient countries, based on mutual commitment, to fully implement the 20/20 initiative. Assistance should concentrate on assisting recipient countries in building an enabling domestic environment for social development.

Moreover, the unsustainable debt burden of the heavily indebted poor countries must be addressed. In this respect, the European Union welcomes the Group of Seven's Cologne initiative on debt alleviation and calls upon all organs of the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions, other actors and civil society to support the initiative and to collaborate in this respect, so that freed resources will be invested by national Governments in education and social services.

Creditor countries and institutions should take action to achieve rapid progress towards deeper, broader and faster debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative and through other means to ensure a permanent way out of unsustainable debt burden for the poorest countries, thus demonstrating their commitment to economic and social reform and poverty reduction.

The European Union will continue to support Africa and the least developed countries in their efforts to implement the commitments made at Copenhagen. Full implementation of these commitments requires the mobilization of all development actors at all levels. The European Union shares the Secretary-General's view that a fundamental element in finding solutions to the problems in Africa is to address the causes of conflicts and to promote durable peace and sustainable development. In this respect, peace, democracy, human rights and development are strongly interlinked.

The European Union looks forward to a further dialogue on these issues in the preparatory process for the special session.

Mr. Bouah-Kamon (Cote d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): Five years after the World Summit for Social Development, our Assembly will meet in a special session, from 26 to 30 June 2000, in Geneva, to consider and evaluate the implementation of the outcome of the Social Summit and to propose specific actions and initiatives to promote implementation of the Copenhagen commitments. This mid-term review will make it possible to assess the impact of the Copenhagen Programme of Action on people's lives and its integration into international and national policies aimed at mitigating social inequality, reducing poverty and increasing employment while promoting social cohesion.

The session will not merely be an opportunity for the Assembly to identify good practices and to consider progress made, but also to analyse the failures and the factors that have blocked or slowed down implementation of the Copenhagen commitments. The session will facilitate the adoption of new measures and initiatives to accelerate the achievement of the goals of the Social Summit in the light of the new challenges that need to be met.

Commitment 1 of the Social Summit is the creation of an enabling environment for social development. International developments and the emergence of new challenges have not been conducive to social progress, and social indicators show that, on the contrary, living standards have declined in most developing countries. Per capita income has dropped in more than 100 countries, and individual consumption has gone down by about 1 per cent a year in more than 60 countries. Out of 4.4 billion people, three fifths do not have basic health facilities, one third have no access to drinking water, one fourth live in slums, one fifth go hungry and 1.3 billion have to live on less than a dollar a day. In sub-Saharan Africa, half the population has no access to health care, 42 per cent of the adult population is illiterate, one third have a life expectancy of only 40 years and about 2 million deaths registered in 1998 were caused by AIDS; 59 per cent of the rural population and 43 per cent of the urban population live in abject poverty, with an annual income of about $100.

Declining living standards in the developing countries in general, and in Africa in particular, are basically due to the following factors. First, the many armed conflicts have caused flows of refugees and displaced persons, particularly in Africa, where in 1997, 8.1 million people were uprooted by conflict. It must be acknowledged that some conflicts are caused by a precipitous impoverishment and destruction of social structures, as well as by the collapse of States that are no longer able to guarantee the basic rights of their citizens. Secondly, a terrible dearth of resources results from the burden of debt servicing, dwindling external resource flows, the drop in official development assistance, the decline in direct foreign investment and the reduction in export earnings, all of which has not allowed basic social services to be funded. Thirdly, the impact of globalization has been negative, in particular its diabolical effects on international financial and commodities markets; many people in the populations affected by the resultant crises have been left destitute.

In order to attain the goal of halving poverty by the year 2015, the international community must take bold, vigorous action to cancel the debt of the poorest countries, to increase official development assistance and to relax World Trade Organization rules for developing countries in order to create in these countries a favourable environment for social development.

In spite of this difficult situation, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire has undertaken to honour the Copenhagen commitments by pursuing a social development policy, the thrust of which is set out in the national plan for combating poverty. This plan, elaborated in June 1997 and called Priority Approaches for Combating Poverty,

seeks to mitigate social inequality and to reduce the poverty rate from 36.7 per cent of the population in 1995 to 30 per cent in the year 2000 and to 25 per cent in the year 2002. This poverty for combating poverty encompasses various areas: data collection and follow-up on social indicators, health, education, literacy training, employment, promotion of women, the family, young people and children, housing and living conditions, agriculture, basic infrastructure, decentralization, energy, hydraulic power, and electrification.

Côte d'Ivoire's national plan also seeks to enhance the development of human resources and of health and education services and to promote social initiatives to provide universal, equitable access to high-quality education and health care for all.

With regard to education, the goal is to reduce illiteracy from 57.6 per cent in 1988 to 15 per cent in 2005. The Government of Côte d'Ivoire has undertaken to modernize and improve the level of teaching and access to basic training. One thousand primary classes were set up between 1993 and 1997,of which 49 per cent were in the interior of the country, providing schooling for about 100,000 children.

In the area of health care, the national plan for health-care development for the period 1996-2005 will continue to rehabilitate and build health-care infrastructure; to strengthen health-care programmes, such as those on AIDS, expanded immunization, Buruli ulcer and Guinea worm; and to provide ongoing training for health-care personnel. Immunization coverage was 70 per cent in 1997 and the number of rural maternity clinics and of doctors per inhabitant has almost doubled over the past five years.

Unemployment remains a serious concern for my authorities. They are committed to making greater efforts to set up basic social services to reduce the disparities between areas and to create jobs. Social projects for target populations, such as women and children, have increased their participation in development activities.

Despite these laudable efforts, much remains to be done to attain the goals of the World Summit. Côte d'Ivoire spends 52 per cent of its budgetary resources on paying off its foreign debt and looks forward to some positive repercussions from the decision taken at the G-8 Summit in Cologne to release sufficient resources to finance its poverty-eradication policy. The proposed integration of debt relief into the poverty-eradication strategy formulated by the Government in cooperation with all partners is a commendable step.

It must be pointed out, however, that the link between debt relief and poverty eradication will depend on the real flexibility we have to direct the revenue flowing from debt reduction. This real flexibility may be small for countries that were not able to service their debt effectively. That is why we must stress the need fully to understand this flexibility and the principle of financial additionality. For our countries, the problem is about sufficient flows to finance development.

Côte d'Ivoire hopes that the combined action of Governments, international financial institutions, United Nations development agencies and donor countries will make it possible to improve the living standards of poor peoples.

In this respect, my delegation wishes to pay sincere tribute to the International Labour Organization and the United Nations Development Programme, which have established a programme entitled "Jobs for Africa" to develop employment strategies to eradicate poverty in sub-Saharan Africa. This programme, established for about 10 African countries, seeks to optimize employment and reduce poverty through a coherent, multisectoral and multi-institutional strategy. A national network group of members from all socio-economic sectors will advocate job-creating activities, national-capacity building and the involvement of grass-roots communities.

This example should inspire all multilateral and particularly bilateral development partners to support the efforts of our Governments, which work tirelessly to make realities of the recommendations of the World Summit for Social Development.

Mr. Mehta (India): Gathering here to deliberate the implementation of the Copenhagen commitments and to chart the preparatory process for the special session on the World Summit at Geneva in June next year, we cannot help but reflect on the dismal economic scenario highlighted in the *Trade and Development Report* for 1999. It cautions that the factors that led to the Asian meltdown continue to persist and could recur; international finances remain volatile and markets depressed, with poor growth rates; and developing countries continue to be denied export opportunities by trade walls which remain staunchly in place in Western economies.

The Report estimates that developing countries have lost four times as much due to the protectionism of developed countries as they have received through private capital inflows — a key negative equation considering that trade earnings are much needed incomes to back production and employment, while capital inflows are monies to be repaid with interest. In the restricted and hampered environment for greater income generation from trade-related activities, developing countries perforce have had to increase their reliance on international borrowing. This reliance on borrowed "hot money" exposes them to acute and avoidable social and economic risks and holds their peoples ransom to unfaithful capital which knows not people but profits.

We therefore wholeheartedly endorse the call of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) for a positive trade agenda. We believe that such an agenda should allow the free flow of goods from developing countries and divert much of the $350-billion agricultural subsidies of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries to social and economic development in developing countries. No social agenda or commitment can bear fruit in an environment which does not allow fair play in the markets.

The Copenhagen Summit visualized the world order as moving towards the provision of basic human services for all. The fundamental philosophy of the Summit was to make development more people-centred. In that philosophy, the underlying principle was of equity in access to livelihood, health, education and other social services in an enabling national and global order. However, what we have today as we approach the next century is a pattern of disabling inequities in the international macroeconomic environment, which goes to debilitate social and economic development in the developing world. Pious pronouncements of principles of social policies and abstract indicators of social progress will have little meaning unless we are able to respect the spirit of basic equality and right to social and economic progress for all nations inscribed in the Charter of the United Nations, and strive consciously for equity in all aspects of our dealings — person to person and nation to nation. Otherwise, we would be betraying the Copenhagen commitments.

Developing countries do have an agenda to implement on social and economic development for the welfare of their own peoples. We reaffirmed this agenda in the Commission on Social Development when the resolution on social services for all was adopted. In the agreed conclusions annexed to the resolution, it was clearly brought out that the international economic environment, through its impact on national economies, affects the capacity of developing countries to provide and expand quality social services. This is particularly true in the context of an increasingly globalizing world.

Globalization has shown that it can help build slowly, but break swiftly. Capital can cut both ways unless harnessed and controlled. It has the power to generate employment, but also to severely marginalize the weak. The predominance of private capital-driven globalization cannot be the final answer for the social development needs of less-developed countries, for it is fundamentally fraught with instability. The lives of countless people would be infinitely better and secure if globalization were driven by equal opportunities for just earnings in a global marketplace.

Where do we stand today, four years after the Copenhagen Summit, in implementing the targets set out in the Programme of Action? From the Secretary-General's report, it is clear that those targets will not be fulfilled in the time-frame agreed upon at the Summit. There is an array of reasons for this, but the single most important reason is the continuing lack of resources in countries striving to attain a greater level of social and economic development. Even to simply maintain a standstill position, let alone aspire to a quantum leap, nations must spend beyond their budgeted means. There being no other recourse, the only way available to carry out activities, including investing in social capital, is through borrowed funds, whether from international sources, budgetary allocations from domestic sources or domestic loans. The high cost implicit in loans for investment in the social sector can lead to greater debt and macroeconomic instability, which can cripple developing countries in their efforts to provide social services to all; but such investments are a necessity for healthy growth of the social sector in order to provide social justice for all.

To reiterate, there can be no debate about the basic necessity of developing countries' access to greater income and resources through the non-inflationary path of international trade. Trade without impediments is the greatest need of the times, rather than unfettered trade in capital. There cannot be a stronger contribution to the creation of an enabling environment for social and economic transformation than this.

The 10 commitments made at Copenhagen served to underline the inclusive nature of development. They also brought into focus the fact that building social capital is as important as economic growth. Subsumed in the 10 commitments was the axiom that social investments in areas such as education, skills, health, nutrition and gender in fact create a positive compact for greater economic growth and social advancement; indeed, the two are inextricable.

Welfare has and must become an integral part of the agenda in the development of economies. However, as we undertake the review process and make preparations for the Geneva special session on social development, we have to reflect on whether the compact arrived at in Copenhagen requires any change. While we do not feel that the commitments need to be renegotiated, we strongly believe that development, to be inclusive and dynamic, requires urgent new initiatives. A rededication to making the provision of social services achievable by all is essential. Visible commitments to reforming the international environment and making it more enabling than it is at present: this is the key to forging ahead. But above all, it is the national and international will that matters.

Mr. Albin (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour for the delegation of Mexico to speak on behalf of the Rio Group, in consideration of agenda item 37, entitled "Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development". First, the Rio Group would like to thank the Secretary-General and the Secretariat for the report on this item (A/54/220). This report will serve as a valuable guide for the work of the General Assembly.

The members of the Rio Group have very resolutely undertaken a commitment to social development, as enshrined in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action and reflected in General Assembly resolution 50/161 of 22 December 1995. This commitment was recognized early on in the Buenos Aires Declaration, in 1995, aimed at the regional implementation of the outcome of the Copenhagen World Summit. Subsequently, at meetings held in Bolivia, Paraguay and Panama, the heads of State and Government of the Rio Group reaffirmed regional determination to combat and overcome poverty, as well as their conviction that a sustained process of economic and social development is the only guarantee of improving people's quality of life and of democratic stability in Latin America.

Similarly, in the Veracruz declaration, signed on 19 March 1999 in Mexico, the Rio Group reaffirmed its ongoing commitment to implementing economic and social programmes designed to generate favourable conditions for the definitive integration of the vulnerable sectors of the population into the development process and to eliminate structural imbalances, in particular, conditions of poverty and marginalization. Furthermore, the Group stated that a holistic balance must be achieved among the economic, social and environmental objectives of development.

In addition to the political commitment undertaken by the Rio Group, Latin America has defined concrete action designed to achieve the objectives set at Copenhagen. These measures are contained in the São Paolo consensus, a document that has guided regional efforts for social development.

Since the last session of the General Assembly, we have witnessed significant progress in the work of the United Nations in support of the effective implementation of the Copenhagen commitments. The Rio Group welcomes with satisfaction the outcome of the thirty-seventh session of the Commission for Social Development, whose conclusions on the subject of "Social services for all" will guide the work done and the measures implemented by Governments in an area of great consequence for enhancing the quality of people's lives. The Commission also initiated a fruitful debate on the general consideration of the implementation of the outcome of the Summit, a task that we hope it will be thoroughly discussed at its February 2000 session.

The Rio Group would like to reaffirm its gratitude to and support for the Bureau of the Commission for Social Development, led by our colleague Mr. Aurelio Fernández of Spain, for the efficiency with which they have carried out their activities. We hope that the thirty-eighth session of the Commission will be able to tackle the tasks relating to the assessment of the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development, so that the Commission will be able to make a substantial contribution to the Preparatory Committee and the special session to be held in the year 2000.

The Rio Group also welcomes the work of the Preparatory Committee for Copenhagen + 5, chaired by our colleague and friend, Ambassador Christian Maquieira, of Chile, a member country of our Group. The work carried out thus far has enabled the Committee to make significant progress. The participation of non-governmental organizations in the special session has

been spelled out. The Preparatory Committee has also allocated mandates to the various actors within the United Nations family in order to promote the assessment of the outcome of the World Summit and facilitate the elaboration of initiatives to bring about better implementation of the 10 commitments undertaken by the international community in Copenhagen.

In addition, there has been an important negotiation effort within the Preparatory Committee concerning a final document for the special session. The Rio Group believes that this document should generate a renewed impetus for countries in their commitment to social development. Therefore, not only should it restate the commitment, but it must also include new initiatives, bearing in mind what has already been achieved in terms of integrating social policies within the general context of development.

The Rio Group believes that the responsibility of the Member States of the United Nations is to continue this process with as much imagination, creativity and dedication as possible, leaving aside old paradigms of confrontation which in the past only paralysed our action.

Before concluding, the Rio Group would like to restate its gratitude to the Government of Switzerland for the excellent preparations being made for the special session to be held in Geneva. We believe that these arrangements will make possible broad participation and a level of organization that will provide a suitable framework for this important forum.

Globalization has had undeniably positive effects on development. Nevertheless, the recent crisis that has affected our economies has revealed how fragile and dependent social aspects remain, since they have been the most severely affected. The Rio Group therefore reaffirms the need to seek ways to achieve a balance between the economic and social realms, so as to achieve growth with equity and place development with a comprehensive approach within reach of all.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): Almost five years ago our heads of State and Government gathered in Copenhagen and committed themselves to an ambitious agenda for poverty eradication, social integration and productive employment. In less than a year from now, in June 2000, Member State representatives will meet again to reconfirm their commitment to the Copenhagen agenda and review progress made in its implementation. They will consider where further initiatives are needed to make sure that the commitments are followed up through concrete policies and actions at all levels.

We welcome the progress that has already been made during the preparatory process. Before the next session of the Preparatory Committee we will have before us a number of reports and recommendations on key aspects of social development from relevant organs and agencies of the United Nations. These inputs, in addition to the national reports, will help us to identify the kind of initiatives and action that need to be taken to ensure the full implementation of the Social Summit agenda. In the process ahead, we also look forward to contributions from other relevant actors, not least from the non-governmental organization community and other parts of civil society. The high-level segment of this year's Economic and Social Council substantive session, entitled "The role of employment and work in poverty eradication: the empowerment and advancement of women", also provided useful input to this follow-up process.

The forthcoming analysis of national reports will undoubtedly show that a lot has been done during the past few years. On the other hand, we know that 30 per cent of the Earth's people still live on less than a dollar a day and that the last decade has seen no reduction in the number of poor people. The challenges are daunting, but we have both the knowledge and the resources needed to address them.

For the poorest and most heavily indebted countries, the debt problem is one of the main obstacles to development. Urgent action is needed to end the unsustainable debt burden for these countries. Norway warmly welcomes the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative agreed to by the recent annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. The changes made to the HIPC mechanism will result in deeper, broader and faster debt relief, very much in line with what Norway has advocated for years. The challenge now is to cover the remaining gap in order to secure full financing of the enhanced Initiative.

An enabling environment at both the national and international level is crucial for social development. Good governance and respect for human rights are fundamental elements of such an environment, as are macro-economic factors.

One of the key outcomes of the Social Summit was agreement on the goal of universal access to basic social services. Ensuring access to basic health services and education for all will promote productive employment and social integration, and is crucial in the fight against poverty. The preparatory process has demonstrated that there is broad consensus on this matter. However, universal access is far from being achieved, and further action and initiatives are needed at all levels. The reports expected from the United Nations system — in particular those on education for all, access to primary health services and implementation of the 20/20 Initiative — should guide us in our further efforts towards this goal.

The goal of full employment requires action at many levels. Access to credit and training opportunities is essential. Special attention must be given to improving employment opportunities for the long-term unemployed, people with disabilities and other groups with special needs. At the same time, Governments must ensure that the basic rights and interests of workers are safeguarded.

Norway is concerned at the apparent increase in the number of children being exploited through child labour. Urgent action is needed at both the national and the international level. Speedy ratification by Member States of the new International Labour Organization Convention against the worst forms of child labour would be an important contribution.

The main responsibility for implementing the Copenhagen commitments lies with national Governments. However, the cooperation of the international community is also required, particularly in Africa and in the least developed countries. Norway is deeply concerned about the low level of global official development assistance. In the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, the average level of development assistance now stands at approximately 0.23 per cent of the gross national product, far below the agreed target of 0.7 per cent.

Norway has been contributing substantially more than this for decades and is allocating increased resources to the poorest countries and to social sectors.

However, increasing the resources available is only one way of maximizing the impact of international development cooperation. We must also look into how our development efforts can be better coordinated. For the United Nations system, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework represents an important step towards a more coordinated approach. The comprehensive development framework takes this one step further, by proposing that all foreign and domestic actors should cooperate on a common development strategy, with national Governments in the driver's seat. We hope that the special session will review how these and other initiatives can help promote implementation of the Summit commitments.

I would like to conclude by saying that Norway is fully committed to the implementation of the outcome of the Social Summit. We will take an active part in the preparations for the special session, and we will do our best to contribute to its success.

Mr. Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia): Mongolia attaches great importance to the consideration by the plenary Assembly of the agenda item entitled "Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development".

The peaceful advancement of the human family and the security of its livelihood can no longer be sustained in a world impregnated by abject poverty, external debt burden, growing technological and economic gaps between the rich and the poor, widespread hunger and malnutrition, violence and discrimination, drugs and infectious diseases.

Mindful of the urgency to adequately address these problems, during the last decade of this century the international community has taken various measures through, *inter alia*, organizing a series of world summits and conferences and proclaiming and observing United Nations decades and international years on specific social issues and target groups. The Copenhagen Social Summit was one such conference. It demonstrated that social development is indeed a question of global concern, and therefore the implementation of its decisions naturally acquires special significance.

The cumulative results of the conferences offer a strong basis for promoting development cooperation and identifying the United Nations role in this area. Development cooperation has rightly been given a people-centred, sustainable, gender-sensitive and social dimension.

Mongolia attaches great importance to the forthcoming special session of the General Assembly, to be devoted to the theme "World Summit for Social Development and beyond: achieving social development for all in a globalizing world". We believe that it should

reaffirm the Copenhagen Declaration and the Programme of Action and identify the progress achieved and the challenges that lie ahead. Concrete actions and initiatives aimed at full and effective implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action should be identified and adopted by the forthcoming session. In this regard, my delegation believes that the *Human Development Report* prepared annually by the United Nations Development Programme can provide useful guidelines for defining and elaborating new, concrete initiatives in the spirit of the Copenhagen Summit.

My delegation welcomes the results of last year's special session of the Economic and Social Council devoted to the integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up of major United Nations conferences and summits, as well as the work of the Preparatory Committee on the implementation of the outcome of the Summit and further initiatives. Likewise, we welcome the practice of holding panel discussions on priority issues as an important and innovative contribution to these deliberations.

Mongolia, like many other countries undergoing fundamental changes, has been grappling with the challenges of the transition period for the past eight years. Market reforms have been boldly accelerated by liberalization of trade and prices, large-scale privatization and other economic measures.

However, the reform process has been and still is painful. The inherent burdens of a weak banking and financial system, insignificant foreign investment, unfavourable market conditions and inefficient State enterprises, coupled with a lack of free- market traditions and experience, have compounded the reform challenge. This has directly affected the social sector. Thus, according to Mongolia's human development report, the transition has not been without its heavy costs. A large part of the population is poor and unemployed. The child mortality rate is still high. Almost one fourth of the population still does not have access to safe drinking water. Moreover, the phenomenon of street children continues to arouse deep concern in our society.

To adequately address the problems, the Government of Mongolia is mobilizing all its internal resources and potentials to implement a number of programmes and projects. For these reasons, in the foreseeable future, external assistance and support will still be important for us.

My delegation wishes to take this opportunity to highlight an innovative project known as the United Nations One World Youth Conference Series, which the Secretary-General described as a "shining example". It was initiated by the Government of Mongolia in close cooperation with the organizations of the United Nations represented in Mongolia, as well as non-governmental organizations. This project, consisting of six national conferences, emerged as the national response to the United Nations objectives and was aimed at promoting and ensuring an integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up of major United Nations conferences and summits at the national and, especially, at the local, grass-roots level. The series covered the conferences on children, human rights, population, social development and women and was closed by the national summit. All were held in 1998 and 1999.

Young delegates, aged between 15 and 19, including those with disabilities and from low-income families, participated in the conferences. The main purpose of these conferences, held with the direct and active participation of young people, was to raise the general public's awareness of the goals set and the commitments undertaken by Governments, to promote dialogue with the decision makers on follow-ups and to encourage an active involvement of young people, civil society and the local governments in the implementation of the relevant national plans of action. Hundreds of interesting, thought-provoking and helpful ideas were proposed during these conferences.

The conference series resulted in the adoption of the national development strategy, aptly described by the participants themselves as "turning from a mosquito into a busy bee", a strategy that is being reflected in the national policy. As a result of these conferences, and to ensure follow-up, One World Clubs have been established in all 21 provinces and the capital city of Ulaanbaatar with the aim of further expanding the project and closely monitoring the implementation of the plans of action at the local level. In view of the inspiring results of the One World Conference Series, the Government of Mongolia believes that other Members of the United Nations might also find them interesting and even useful.

Implementation of the Summit decisions calls for a genuine political commitment on the part of Governments and the international community to substantially increase resources for sustainable human development. Therefore, we reiterate our full support for the 20/20 agreement reached in Copenhagen. The resources pledged should be

fully earmarked and utilized, both at national and international levels.

The current decline in official development assistance and in contributions to the United Nations core resources is a matter of concern for Mongolia, as it is for many other countries. As a developing landlocked country with limited financial resources, at present Mongolia relies to some extent on external resources for development. My delegation supports the cost-sharing practices in the United Nations system's operational activities and would like to re-emphasize the need to increase core resources on a predictable, continuous and assured basis. It also favours increased non-core and earmarked funding, as well as the mobilization of private sector support.

In conclusion, may I express my delegation's sincere hope that the ongoing deliberations on the implementation of the outcome of the Summit will help generate the renewed political will at the national and international levels that is so needed to attain the noble objectives of sustainable human development.

Mr. Šimonović (Croatia): The Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the World Summit for Social Development in 1995 represented an important consensus on the need to put people at the centre of development. Croatia joined this consensus four years ago and still attaches great importance to faithful adherence to the Copenhagen commitments. By actively participating in the preparatory process for the special session on the implementation of the outcome of the Summit, my Government would like to contribute to achieving our common goals in fighting poverty, creating productive jobs and making a stable, safe and just society for all.

The Summit's goals of eliminating inequality within and among States was designed to create stability and security in the world, which would lead to lasting peace. In this noble endeavour, it is necessary to focus not only on social and economic development exclusively, but also on the full spectrum of development, which includes full respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including equality between men and women.

At this juncture, more than four years after the holding of the Summit, we are in the middle of the preparations for the special session of the General Assembly to review and evaluate the implementation of the outcome of the Summit, which will take place in the year 2000. The Commission for Social Development and the preparatory Committee are leading the process in the right direction. Nevertheless, it is necessary for all Member States to contribute to finding ways to proceed further in order to accomplish the goals set at Copenhagen.

The Republic of Croatia submitted its national report, which provides a detailed analysis of steps taken in implementation of the Copenhagen commitments, in the strong desire to assist the Secretary-General in preparing a comprehensive report to be submitted in the year 2000, as requested by the Preparatory Committee. The special session's objectives are to reaffirm the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, as well as to identify progress made and lessons learned in the implementation at the national and international levels. Furthermore, it is to recommend concrete action towards full and effective implementation.

Although there have been some national and collective efforts to fulfil the commitments made in Copenhagen, much more needs to be done. As stated in the report of the Secretary-General (A/54/220), the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council in 1999, in particular its high-level segment, reaffirmed the commitment made at the World Summit for Social Development to the goal of eradicating poverty throughout the world. Additionally, it reaffirmed the commitment made at the Fourth World Conference on Women to promote women's economic independence and recognized that productive employment, including the empowerment of women, plays a central role in poverty eradication.

The trends are very worrying. Poverty, instead of being reduced, has actually increased since the holding of the Summit, and the gap between the rich and the poor continues to widen. Sixty countries have been getting steadily poorer since 1980. It is of great concern that official development assistance has been declining continuously and that only a handful of countries have achieved or surpassed the target of applying 0.7 per cent of their gross national product for such assistance.

Globalization has a capacity to do harm, but to do good as well. Its negative consequences affect mostly the poor and vulnerable. Consideration needs to be given to whether we need to manage its economic and social benefits to achieve globalization with a human face.

The multilateral trading system continues to develop, but there are some unjustified obstacles for newcomers.

Although Croatia, together with some other countries, has concluded all of its bilateral negotiations, it continues to be prevented from achieving its goal of accession to the World Trade Organization due to a dispute between two large members that has nothing to do with Croatia or the merits of its application. The circumstances are ironic when they are compared to the content of the ministerial communiqué on market access adopted by the Economic and Social Council last year, which underlined the importance of trade liberalization. In that document a renewed commitment was made to strengthen an open, rule-based and, among other things, equitable and transparent multilateral trade system. The artificial and arbitrary obstacle to the accession of certain States stands in sharp contrast to these words.

In conclusion, I wish to stress my Government's belief that the United Nations will continue to provide its valuable support, particularly in creating a new reality for developing countries and countries in transition, for the purpose of their integration into our globalized world so that all of us can enter the third millennium better prepared and with more optimism. Globalization that brings increasing global interdependence requires, *inter alia*, increased international cooperation and solidarity to fulfil the commitments of the Social Summit.

Mr. Dausá Céspedes (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me at the outset to express the support of my delegation for the statement made by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The Copenhagen Summit met with much scepticism in its time, particularly among third-world countries — not because of its goals, which were truly lofty, but because there was serious doubt as to the possibility of truly implementing its outcome. Nonetheless, the urgent appeal made by the Social Summit for emergency measures to address the very serious problems of poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and lack of basic medical care, among others — which were, and continue to be, responsible for the increasing social marginalization in third-world societies — was received with resolute hope.

Four years later, though, we can see that poverty, rather than diminishing, is increasing. Unemployment, far from decreasing, is on the rise. Health, hygiene and nutrition indicators continue to deteriorate in many countries, and literacy indicators have, in some cases, even regressed. We also note that official development assistance continues to decline at a time when international financial crises and structural adjustment policies are devastating the societies of many developing countries.

The inequity and disparities between third-world and industrialized countries and between high-income and underprivileged groups throughout the planet have increased as the globalization process moves forward. It would seem that neo-liberal globalization, which, according to its advocates and theoreticians, was supposed to bring about progress and well-being, is in fact globalizing injustice and social marginalization. The reality is that everything is being globalized except wealth and social and economic development.

Some had believed that the Copenhagen commitments would make it possible to globalize brotherhood, solidarity and cooperation, sustainable development, the equitable distribution of wealth and the rational use of the wealth of humanity.

But what are we to think when we see that there are 4 billion poor people in the world, 1.3 billion of whom are living in conditions of absolute poverty? What social achievements are we talking about when 200 million children under 5 suffer from malnutrition, and 12 million of those die before even reaching that age?

What are we to think of the fact that the infant mortality rate in developing countries is 10 times higher than in the industrialized countries? What advances have there been in the field of education when 130 million children have no access whatsoever to schools and 1 billion people are illiterate, mainly in the more marginalized areas of the developing world?

It would be difficult to explain to the growing number of people who live in pockets of poverty throughout the industrialized world that in Copenhagen, four years ago, we decided to help them and integrate them into the framework of the tremendous social development that prevails in their countries.

We take note of the results obtained through systemwide coordination in the United Nations in following up Copenhagen. All of the efforts deployed in this follow-up effort are clearly recapitulated and listed in the report of the Secretary-General. However, we also express the hope that follow-up efforts will not cease. In fact, we feel that, in our efforts to follow up Copenhagen, we should more decisively demand greater compliance with the commitments made at that Summit. We are certain that this should be our greatest priority in this process.

We are convinced that proposing new initiatives aimed at extending social development to developing countries as well as to the marginalized sectors of industrialized countries is not a feasible or responsible option in view of the serious failure to implement the existing Copenhagen commitments.

How can we move beyond the Copenhagen commitments when official development assistance has declined to a meagre 0.22 per cent, when assistance to developing countries is increasingly conditional, and when developing countries are prescribed structural adjustment programmes and prescriptions that take no account of social priorities or national characteristics?

In the absence of an international climate that is conducive to an increase in unconditional development assistance along with changes in the existing international economic order, it will not be possible to devise a strategy to make headway in complying with the Social Summit's commitments. Only in this type of conducive environment will developing economies be able to bring about the necessary changes to achieve the required social progress.

Cuba has successfully implemented social development policies and strategies that are based on a fairer and more equitable distribution of wealth. This has enabled our country to achieve satisfactory results in terms of the Copenhagen commitments.

For instance, 100 per cent of Cuba's population has access to free health care and education; life expectancy at birth is 75 years; and the infant mortality rate is 7.1 for every 1,000 live births. One hundred per cent of our children are protected against 11 preventable diseases, and there is one doctor for every 169 inhabitants. One out of every five Cubans is a student, and we have more than 600,000 university graduates.

In 1998 Cuba allocated 41 per cent of its budget to social services.

Clearly, the priority that the Cuban Government has given to social action and its commitment to increasing the well-being of its population have been important factors in raising social indicators to a level that exceeds those of many countries with much higher levels of development and far greater resources. It has done all of this despite the negative impact on our country of the economic war being waged by the North American Government and of the economic, commercial and financial blockade that it has imposed on us, which has resulted in economic losses to the people of Cuba of more than $60 billion.

Cuba is prepared to share its experiences and to contribute, as it always has, to fostering solidarity and cooperation. The Cuban Government attaches high priority to promoting and participating in international efforts to implement the outcome of the Copenhagen Summit.

If we fail to promote cooperation and solidarity, it will be impossible to progress towards a world of social justice for all. Cuba's experience has shown that to be the case. More than 25,000 Cuban health professionals have offered their services to the third world. Today, 200 Cuban doctors are serving under a new programme to provide medical services absolutely free of charge, which we are carrying out in the poorest African countries where conditions are at their most difficult. No fewer than 3,000 Cuban doctors are available to our African brothers under the terms of that programme. Similarly, in Central America and the Caribbean, a further 1,200 Cuban doctors and health-care specialists are offering their services.

Some 2,000 students from Latin America and the Caribbean are studying to become doctors in the Latin American School of Medicine. In a few months that number will have risen to 3,000, and in three years it will have risen to 6,000. We are working to set up medical schools in Africa staffed by Cuban professors who will teach free of charge so as to prepare health-care personnel for work in the field in countries in African countries.

Cuba will have the privilege and the tremendous honour of hosting the South Summit to be held in April 2000, which will bring together the leaders of the Group of 77. This outstanding event will be of great importance in preparing developing countries to confront the challenges of the new millennium with regard to access to development, the eradication of poverty, defending our cultures and the taking of global decisions that affect everyone.

At a time when there is no further justification for cold wars, arms races or enormous military expenditure, we should ask ourselves what is keeping us from allocating all of those resources to promoting the social and economic development of developing countries. For humanity there are no alternatives. Tomorrow it will be too late to do what we should have done long ago.

Mr. Maquieira (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me at the outset to convey to you, Sir, the congratulations of my delegation on your election to preside over the General Assembly at this session. Your major tasks will include tackling the important social agenda of the follow-ups to the World Conference on Women and the World Summit for Social Development during the special sessions planned for next year. It is encouraging to know that those processes will be guided by a distinguished representative of Africa, whose qualities as a diplomat whose integrity, experience and wisdom will lead the work of this Assembly to a successful outcome.

I should also like to express my gratitude and that of my delegation to Switzerland for the human, financial and intellectual resources that, as host country, it has made available for the special session of the General Assembly on the follow-up to the Social Summit. We pay tribute to Switzerland for its generosity, which is aimed specifically at ensuring that Geneva 2000 will be successful in terms of both its outcome and the level at which the international community participates and is represented.

This debate is being held in the context of resolution 52/25, which established parameters for the follow-up process and for the review of the implementation of the commitments undertaken at the Social Summit, in conformity with the decisions of this Assembly with regard to a periodic and overall review of the major world Conferences that have taken place during this decade that is now drawing to a close.

In this context, the General Assembly's Preparatory Committee for the special session on the implementation of the outcome of the Social Summit, over which I have the honour to preside, held its first substantive session last May. Subsequently, it held brief informal consultations at the beginning of September.

Having overcome certain initial difficulties typical of such processes, the Preparatory Committee is now on track and has adopted important decisions with regard to the very specific requirements of the United Nations system concerning accreditation and participation for non-governmental organizations. Fulfilling a unique aspect of its responsibilities, the Committee has also carried out its first overview of possible new initiatives.

The most important and complex part of the process is yet to come. We still have to negotiate the texts that, together with the tasks allocated to the Commission for Social Development concerning the assessment of and follow-up to the commitments undertaken at Copenhagen, will be the main outcome of the special session of the General Assembly. At the same time, as we have embarked on the follow-up process, this important debate in the General Assembly will provide Member States with an opportunity to express their ideas about the future tasks of the Preparatory Committee, its priorities, and the best ways in which to achieve a successful outcome. Of particular interest will be members' opinions on how new realities, both national and international, are affecting the problem of social development — a problem that is almost structural in nature.

That is a significant point because, as has been said many times, the intention of the Copenhagen Summit was not to define social development rigidly, but rather to take steps towards equitable and progressive social development on the basis of three central elements: poverty, employment and social integration. In that sense, the Social Summit was remarkably successful in achieving a political commitment to place social development at the highest possible level nationally and internationally, thereby giving significant momentum to the perception that progress cannot be measured exclusively in terms of growth and productivity.

Thus, the Secretary-General has pointed out, the Social Summit contributed significantly to consolidating the perception — which, though now generally accepted, has yet to be completely translated into effective policies — that the price of macroeconomic adjustments should not be paid by the poorest sectors. It is essential to maintain social expenditure when budgets are being cut; that is an important step towards achieving effective social policies for building stable and fair societies.

At the same time, however, in the period since the Social Summit took place, we have observed that there remain serious obstacles to achieving its objectives, despite the earnest and sustained efforts made by many countries, especially developing countries, to eradicate poverty and bring about full employment and social integration. At the domestic level, there is a particular responsibility to maintain a constant balance between fiscal austerity measures and the need to find the resources required to fund social policies, while not ignoring other issues, especially the lack of fiscal discipline and macroeconomic stability, inadequate social policies and difficulties in broadening the participation of the various sectors of society.

At the international level, no one can deny that the enabling environment for development has deteriorated. The process of globalization, which in general is positive, has also resulted in inequality and marginalization, and no measures or institutions have yet been put in place to correct those effects, which have aggravated social problems between countries and within societies. In addition, problems have persisted concerning market access for the products of developing countries, international financial instability and the coordination of the macroeconomic policies of the industrialized countries. Furthermore, these developments are taking place at a time of change, both ideological and systemic — sometimes accompanied by violence — in many parts of the international community.

But there has been no suitable response to people's everyday concerns. To some extent, we are losing sight of the fact that political, humanitarian and financial crises have serious social consequences that have a particularly harsh impact at the community level long after necessary and welcome decisions begin to have a positive effect in specific areas.

In short, the main reasons for convening the World Summit for Social Development, as set out in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, could have been formulated today — with the addition of the social consequences of the financial crisis. Such is the validity of those concepts and, unfortunately, such is the lack of measures to improve the situation they describe. We have thus concluded that the key to meeting the challenges we face and to resolving our problems lies in our approach and policy choices, and in paying careful attention to the direction and objectives we identify. That is also why we consider it necessary to address our tasks with a balanced and inclusive approach on the basis of long-term, action-oriented commitments.

With that in mind, let us consider the path that lies ahead for the Preparatory Committee. One of the new topics that has emerged in our deliberations relates to identifying valid principles and sound practices for social policy. I must say at the outset that this concept could be confusing, because the Copenhagen agreements are an ethical expression of our right to a secure, stable and dignified life, whereas they basically define sound principles for social policy. The task of the Preparatory Committee is thus not to formulate such principles but, on the basis of the commitments, to develop the ongoing process of transforming them into specific policies suited to the particular situation in each country.

Here I must note that the sound principles arising from the social Summit apply to all members of the international community without distinction between industrialized and developing countries; they must be applied to all if they are to be truly effective. The outcome of the Preparatory Committee's deliberations on this topic must be a significant component of a new international financial architecture.

At its special session the General Assembly will have to adopt the goal of reducing by one half the percentage of those living in extreme poverty by 2015; this goal must become a commitment at the national level and a mandate for international institutions if we are to formulate the necessary global strategies.

On employment, the special session will have to give vigorous political impetus to the creation of a global strategy, under the leadership of the International Labour Organization and its tripartite structures for participation, which will lay the foundations for the sustained creation of productive employment in the future. Growth in job-creation is the principal way out of poverty, and will strengthen social integration. Hence the critical importance of this matter in our deliberations.

The June 2000 session will have to pay special attention to the economic and social situation in Africa. New initiatives in line with commitment 7 of the social Summit must be aimed at making a real difference in the conditions in that region. It may be possible to consider the possibility that African countries could set national timetables for growth in basic education, for improvements in health and for related measures. As a complement, donor countries and international agencies would increase resources and technical assistance in these areas. We are carefully observing ongoing developments on debt reduction for the heavily indebted poor countries; the Preparatory Committee is ready to make whatever contribution is necessary for this process.

The question of resources for social development is a Gordian knot whose complexities lie both at the national and the international levels; it must be addressed during the preparatory process, when all its diverse elements must be considered. Any possible results should contribute to the ongoing debate on development financing.

We must give special attention to following up the results achieved at Geneva next June, with a particular eye to translating the agreements from the global

perspective of the General Assembly to their regional and national dimensions, with a view to consolidating a political culture in favour of social progress, to use the phrase employed at the Copenhagen meeting that marked the beginning of the social Summit. Here, the regional commissions could be mandated to work with Member States to prepare an integrated follow-up of what was agreed not only at the social Summit but also at the other major conferences; such follow-up would be adapted to the individual characteristics of each region.

These are only some of the many tasks before the Preparatory Committee for the special session of the General Assembly. At the national level, it will be no easy matter to prioritize valid interests within the purview of countries, given insufficient resources. Something similar takes place at the international level, which sometimes reflects what happens within countries with respect to the limited availability of resources and conflicting priorities. That is why the Copenhagen meeting was held at the level of heads of State: at summit level it was possible to take the kind of decisions that are normally addressed at the national level. This premise remains valid with respect to the special session of the General Assembly; for that reason we urge States to participate at the highest possible level at Geneva next June. The special session may in turn may be an opportunity for the international community to rebuild the foundations of a common understanding of what good things have been lost both at the national and at the international levels.

Hence, because of its complex mandate, the scope of the agreements it may adopt and the ethical imperatives it must face up to, the special session of the General Assembly on the implementation of the outcome of the social Summit will be the third pillar in terms of importance, joining the negotiations on a new financial architecture and the Millennium Round of trade negotiations under the auspices of the World Trade Organization. I hope everyone will understand it in that way.

Mr. Ngo Quang Xuan (Viet Nam): Allow me at the outset to express my support for the statement made by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

My delegation welcomes this timely debate, since the special session on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and further initiatives is fast approaching. In that connection, my delegation highly appreciates the ongoing preparatory process for the special session undertaken by United Nations Member States, organizations and agencies.

Viet Nam fully shares the principles and goals set out at the World Summit for Social Development. In Viet Nam, social development has always been a priority on the national agenda since Viet Nam regained its independence. However, for many decades our efforts in this field have been severely hampered by the backwardness of the economy and by wars, among other things. The wars not only took away human and physical resources, but also left behind serious consequences to overcome. The present fierce competition in the process of globalization and the negative impacts of the regional financial crisis, add to those obstacles.

In that context, Viet Nam has endeavoured to implement the 10 commitments of the social Summit. Viet Nam's economy has experienced high rates of growth in the 1990s, averaging 8 per cent per year between 1990 and 1997. The proportion of the State budget allocated for social programmes is continuously increased, reaching 17.3 per cent in 1997. The Vietnamese Government has issued sets of policies and measures to develop the economy and stabilize the socio-political situation, some of which I shall now highlight.

Among the priorities in building a suitable environment for social development, we place the utmost importance on the development of a legal framework, including the promulgation and implementation of very important laws, such as the labour code, the law on children's care and protection, the education law and the ordinances on the disabled and the ageing. Measures to democratize and enhance the effectiveness of the State and Government organs have been undertaken throughout the country. National targeted programmes for social development have been worked out and annually reviewed by the Government to ensure effective implementation.

Poverty alleviation programmes have been designed for, and implemented in, many provinces. Local people are increasingly engaged in the formulation of such programmes, in accordance with their own conditions and needs. Special attention in terms of microcredit and the provision of production guidance is given to the poor people living in remote or mountainous areas and communities with extreme poverty. On average, the poverty proportion is reduced by 1.5 to 2 per cent annually.

In the face of a very high and increasing unemployment rate, which was about 6.85 per cent in 1998, the Government of Viet Nam has approved a national employment programme aimed at creating annually between 1.3 and 1.4 million new jobs, reducing the urban unemployment rate to 5 per cent and increasing the proportion of vocationally trained workers to 22 per cent by 2000. To realize those employment targets, we focus on developing a household and plantation economy, as well as high-tech industrial zones, small, medium- and large-scale enterprises and linking vocational training with the requirements of production and the labour market.

Improvement of basic social services provision is another priority. The State budget allocations for education, health care services, population and family planning, safe water and sanitation have been increased steadily, reaching 9.1 per cent in 1997. Besides those social services, Viet Nam has maintained a policy of assisting people who made a great contribution to the nation's wars for national independence and those belonging to disadvantaged groups or groups with special needs and vulnerability. Viet Nam is strongly supportive of the implementation of the 20/20 initiative, considering this to be a feasible approach to investing in human capital. In October 1998, with the assistance of several international organizations and the co-sponsorship of the Government of Norway, the Government of Viet Nam hosted an international meeting, which reviewed the implementation of the 20/20 initiative and adopted the Hanoi Consensus.

Viet Nam's experience shows that sustainable social development is based on political stability, economic development and social justice. Successful implementation of the social policies is due to the fact that these policies meet people's aspirations and that the people respond to them. It is important to optimally mobilize and utilize all national potential, based on the leading role of the Government and the participation in social development of every individual, organization and economic sector. The Government must place the goals of social development at the centre of economic policy-making, even in times of difficulty.

International cooperation plays no less important a role in this endeavour. Yet in the world today the immense pressure generated by the process of globalization and market mechanisms has been seriously affecting socio-economic development in many countries. For the developing and least developed countries, the continuous fall of official development assistance, piling up of external debt, decline in their ability to get access to the global market for their limited exports, plus new conditionalities on export opportunities have aggravated their multifaceted constraints. It is all the more imperative to create a more just and cooperative world economic order to support national efforts for social and economic development.

Mr. Yamazaki (Japan): At the World Summit for Social Development in 1995 the international community succeeded in generating great momentum towards the realization of the idea of placing people at the centre of development. My delegation would like to reaffirm the significance of the outcome of the Summit and also express its sincere appreciation for the leadership of the Government of Chile and of the Secretary-General. It is as a result of their sustained efforts, along with the cooperation of many countries, that this subject is now on the global agenda.

During the four short years since Copenhagen the world has faced its share of problems, such as regional conflicts, international and domestic economic crises and natural disasters. Due to their urgent nature, we Member countries of the United Nations have done our best to cooperate in coping with them in the short term. However, in the medium- to long-term, these problems have a major bearing upon social development, including on our efforts to eradicate poverty, achieve full employment and promote social integration. All these require us to strengthen our efforts to promote social development. From this point of view, Japan welcomes the decision of the General Assembly to hold the special session next year, which will make it possible to mobilize the wisdom of the world on this matter.

Japan also strongly supports the idea of human-centred development, which is the fundamental principle of the Copenhagen Declaration. We also believe that the follow-up process should stress the realization of a human-centred millennium.

In the general debate on 21 September Mr. Masahiko Koumura, Foreign Minister of Japan, emphasized the importance of addressing a range of issues by focusing on human security. He called for the protection of the dignity and life of every person against the numerous threats posed, for example, by poverty, the outflow of refugees, environmental degradation, infectious diseases like AIDS, human rights violations, anti-personnel land mines and small arms, terrorism and natural disasters. Thus, Japan advocates making human security a more central focus in order to induce the international community to pay more attention to these

problems. Japan also believes that this approach, which aims at realizing human potential and enhancing the quality of life, reflects the idea of human-centred development.

To ensure human security and address the core issues of social development — to eradicate poverty and achieve full employment and social integration — Japan believes that it is crucial to enhance individual self-reliance. To this end, Governments concerned should strengthen their efforts to develop human capacity; improve access to products and basic social services; enhance support for civil society, including non-governmental organizations; and adopt a participatory approach. It goes without saying that in their doing so special attention should be given to the empowerment of women and assisting the poor.

I also would like to point out the importance of establishing a new partnership with other actors. We acknowledge that the primary responsibility for social development lies with States. However, it is necessary for the relevant non-State actors in civil society — especially non-governmental organizations, volunteers and the private sector — to help create such a partnership; government cannot do it alone. Furthermore, the countries themselves must take the lead both in establishing individual national plans and in implementing them effectively, each country addressing the specific conditions it faces. Great importance should be attached to this idea of ownership.

Finally, I would like to single out the importance of international cooperation, in order to help the countries concerned enhance individual self-reliance, shape new partnerships and create ownership, which are vital elements for achieving human-centred development.

It is on the basis of these views that the Government of Japan has made efforts at the regional and international levels to advance social development. Last October the second Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD II) succeeded in giving greater impetus to the economic and social development of Africa, based on African ownership and partnership with the international community. Japan also organized an international symposium, "Development: With a special focus on human security", held in June in Tokyo. The issues discussed were poverty eradication, health care, the development of Africa and their implications for human security.

Furthermore, based on the recognition that regional efforts are also important in the preparatory process for the special session, my Government is actively participating in discussions such as the International Labour Organization's Asian regional meeting, which was held in January. I assure all delegations that Japan intends to make a positive contribution to the special session, sharing the experience it has gained with these initiatives.

The new millennium lies just around the corner. I repeat that in order to achieve the goals of social development in the twenty-first century all States must cooperate in pursuing the common interests of the international community. My delegation sincerely hopes that a successful outcome will be enjoyed at the special session as a result of constructive discussions in the Preparatory Committee and in the Commission for Social Development.

Mr. Sutoyo (Indonesia): When the international community convened the World Summit for Social Development in 1995 it was with the most noble intention and determination to resolve once and for all the ills of poverty and destitution. It was to give social development and human well-being, both then and into the twenty-first century, the highest priority. The hope was to improve the human condition throughout the world and to respond with substantive, tangible actions to belief in the dignity and value of human life.

As a consequence of this venture, and because of the genuine good intentions of Member States, the international community crafted its convictions into a set of commitments that, when fulfilled, were to usher in a new era of humanitarianism and prosperity. And let us remember that the tasks on which the international community embarked are by no means small, or easily achieved. They are global and of great complexity. My delegation has no doubt that in the long run the goals of the World Summit for Social Development will be reached and the commitments will be fulfilled.

Having said that, I am compelled to note, even though only four years have passed since Copenhagen, that my delegation had hoped more would have been achieved by now. We had hoped that a perceptible trend would have emerged and that this trend would strengthen our confidence in the Summit and lend encouragement as we tackle the difficult tasks ahead. We had hoped that some measure of success would be evident in the war on poverty. On the contrary, however, there is still little to show in the way of progress, and in fact poverty has increased in many parts of the world, along with unemployment. Today, over a billion people remain

impoverished. One and a half billion lack safe drinking water. Social integration remains elusive.

It is clear today that the onset of globalization and trade liberalization have not been to the benefit of all countries, and that many developing countries are ill-prepared to meet the challenges and reap the rewards of a global economy. Recent events certainly attest to that. And despite signs of stabilization in financial markets, economic growth during this past year alone has been insufficient to support the necessary social programmes and activities that are required to meaningfully follow up the World Summit for Social Development. Employment, wages and social development programmes are slow to recover, and it will be some time before momentum is regained.

The experience of the past two years leads us to conclude that what is urgently needed is a redesign of the international financial architecture. We need only to follow the actions prescribed at Copenhagen. They include achieving a higher degree of stability in financial markets, reducing the risk of financial crisis, improving the stability of exchange rates, stabilizing interest rates and striving for low real interest rates in the long run, and reducing the uncertainties of financial flows.

Likewise, the current state of international trade should be reviewed with the aim of boosting the exports of developing countries. International markets must be opened to the exports of developing countries as a prerequisite to generating employment in these countries and providing the real wages necessary to overcome poverty. Any new trade negotiations should therefore take the interests of the developing countries fully into account. At the same time, every effort should be made to enhance capacity-building and improve trade infrastructure in developing countries. As we prepare for the tenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD X), the special session could reaffirm the role of this body as the principal forum in the United Nations for trade and related issues, and for developing strategies consistent with the Summit goals.

At the same time, we must continue forward in reducing the debt burdens of developing countries and increasing financing for development. I am encouraged by recent initiatives for debt relief and also by several remarks that have been made recently regarding debt forgiveness. Debt relief needs to be implemented without delay so as to free financial resources for social and economic development. At the same time, it is important to move in the direction of the target set for official development assistance, not the reverse. Private investment cannot replace this source of financing, as the risk is now all too clear.

In the four years since the Summit, the developing countries have enjoyed little in the way of the technical and financial cooperation for development that was committed and certainly they have not engaged the path to rapid, broad-based sustainable development. It is in fact somewhat difficult to undertake a review of progress made in follow-up activities when the economic picture today is bleaker than it was at the time of the Summit. I believe that the time has passed when mere discussion of initiatives and experiences gained can do justice to those we represent.

The forthcoming special session should therefore be an occasion for a frank discussion of the obstacles to implementation, of the failure of the international community to effectively assist developing countries in eradicating poverty, and of how we are to get back on track. This necessarily includes a settlement of the problem of financing for development and action in such areas as trade and debt. The Preparatory Committee has made a number of useful recommendations, which Indonesia supports and which we hope will receive more than rhetorical attention. Also among the recommendations is facilitating the transfer of technology, knowledge and information to developing countries. I would underscore the importance of this if the developing countries hope to avoid complete and total marginalization from the shift towards a knowledge-based economy.

Let me note that Indonesia remains confident that the international economic environment will improve and ultimately provide the necessary stimulus for social development. I am confident that the lessons of the past will be translated into effective policy for the future. The special session, being held at the close of a financial crisis, offers us yet another opportunity to give meaning to our rhetoric and to set the course for future action. In that process, however, I would caution that the events of the past two years should not become a pretext for moving from social development to social engineering.

Poverty will be overcome only with a true and genuine commitment to providing the poor of the world with access to credit, financial resources and the means for sustainable development. The plight of the poor will be further exacerbated if hunger and starvation are

addressed only within a uniform, politically correct context.

Mr. Tudela (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like at the outset to join previous speakers in reiterating our congratulations on Mr. Gurirab's election as President of the General Assembly. We feel convinced that, under his leadership, we will be able to achieve the goals that we have set ourselves for the proper development of the different and important items on the agenda of this Assembly at fifty-fourth sessions.

I wish now to refer to item 37 of the agenda, "Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development". In this context, my delegation wishes to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of Mexico on behalf of the Rio Group.

In 1995, the international community, represented by 186 countries, assumed the challenge of fighting poverty, creating productive employment and reinforcing the social fabric. By these means, we placed the individual at the centre of development and raised the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action to the level of a global commitment. We then returned to the idea that the care of the human individual was an essential direction for development and that the righting of social imbalances would allow progress to be achieved in the search for sustainable human development.

Yet again, investment in quality education, nutrition and health, the creation of equal opportunity conditions and the establishment of incentives to raise production and productivity became the main subject of a worldwide debate. In this sense, the Copenhagen Summit was a step forward in the joint effort to address economic stability with the creation of better living conditions for all people. This effort was recorded in the decision of the international community to hold a number of world conferences under United Nations auspices that would allow consensus to develop on certain values and goals for defining specific actions in certain areas of worldwide concern and interest.

Today, four years later, it is only fair to acknowledge the importance of the Copenhagen documents, which have served as the basis on which Governments, civil society and the international financing agencies have established social development as a substantive element in the development of our countries. This entails the forthright recognition that poverty reduction also involves the elimination of its consequences, allowing the economic structure of a country to enjoy an ongoing and consistent organizational and institutional system.

To battle poverty face to face demands in equal measure the existence of solid institutions, adequate financing resources, specific programmes to identify the areas of poverty, and the unwavering political will of Governments.

In Latin America, and specifically in Peru, we have come to understand the development of this concept and its effective implementation. There have been distinctly different approaches to drawing up and implementing social policies. This has been due to the natural differences in the development and integration of countries into the international economy and, obviously, to their capacity to respond to the new phenomena generated by the international system.

In the specific case of Peru, the basic goal for the period 1996-2000 was the reduction of the percentage of the population living in extreme poverty by 50 per cent, from 19.3 per cent in 1995 to 10 per cent by the year 2000. The focused strategy of the campaign against extreme poverty that was created for this purpose gave priority to caring, by means of assistance programmes, for the vulnerable groups of the population, such as children under five, pregnant women, senior citizens and people who had been displaced by terrorism.

In this context, in the context of our own economic development, over the past year we have decided to emphasize the generation of productive employment, taking into consideration the new tendencies of the market and adapting the skills of our human capital to the new labour demands. In the years to come, for economies with a relative average development, the subject of employment, which was included as a commitment in Copenhagen, will be essential to overcoming the link between poverty, low productivity and insufficient levels of skilled human capital. We are seeking in this way to obtain, on the one hand, a multiplier effect on the economy and, on the other, to endow our citizens with useful tools for their human development.

In that regard, implementation of Peru's economic and social policies seeks, directly and indirectly, to bring about the inclusion of the most impoverished sectors in society and to make them active agents in the country's development. For that reason, Peru's commitment with

regard to the Copenhagen Summit is not circumstantial; rather, it is directly related to a permanent State policy.

In recent years, within the framework of the Commission for Social Development, we have held a constructive debate and a detailed review of the Copenhagen outcome. We believe that this work has been important in providing States with conclusions that are relevant to our work, particularly as suggestions for policies that can be implemented in our countries. Last May we participated in the initial work of the Preparatory Committee on Copenhagen + 5, chaired by Ambassador Cristián Maquieira of Chile. This was a complex task, as all the other reviews of the outcomes of world conferences have been and will continue to be, insofar as they are linked to the most important concerns of States. We are sure that we will be able to reaffirm the Copenhagen commitments and deal with them in depth. Within that framework, we must state that the diversity of the social domain and the acknowledgement of our countries' different degrees of development should serve specifically to forge common positions that result in the adoption of initiatives for greater and better implementation of the Copenhagen Programme of Action. Entering into a debate that poses a contradiction between economic and social affairs will always have a negative impact on the initiatives that the international community must adopt in Geneva next year. Similarly, emphasizing a single aspect that responds only to a specific or regional situation would diminish the importance of the results of our work.

Generally speaking, we can say, to the contrary, that developed and developing countries have now adopted social and economic policies whose nature responds to similar concepts or models. The acknowledgement of this element is essential in order to incorporate social policies into development plans so that they will be not only inseparable from but also in conformity with the current realities of the international economy.

We are aware of the importance of the Copenhagen + 5 process and of the review of the implementation of the commitments adopted in 1995. We also believe that the very development of our countries over the past five years demonstrates the importance of continuously debating and reviewing its content, as well as of adopting follow-up measures for their better implementation. In that regard, we feel that there already exists a sense of responsibility among the international community to undertake the task of social development and providing for the well-being of humanity.

Mr. Naber (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to extend to the President our sincere thanks for steering our deliberations and to the participants for enriching our discussions aimed at exchanging views on the assessment of progress in the implementation of the commitments made at the Copenhagen Summit. I would like to highlight some new challenges that we face so that we can achieve our desired goals.

The subjects discussed at the World Summit for Social Development, held four years ago, have re-emerged in a forceful and an urgent manner. The economic, technological and informatics gaps between developed and developing countries are being further widened for important reasons, including, *inter alia*, declining rates of foreign investment flows to developing countries; the heavy debt burden under which developing countries are languishing, which has reached $2.2 billion; declining official development assistance, in absolute and relative terms, which has reached its lowest level in 50 years; and imbalances in the international economic order, which have adversely affected developing countries' economies and have negatively affected their social indexes and basic services.

My delegation attaches great importance to the special session of the General Assembly on the review of the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development. We hope for the fulfilment of commitments made by heads of States and Prime Ministers in support of employment, eradication of poverty and the creation of an enabling environment for developing countries so that they can achieve social integration and fulfil commitments related to education and health care. This in turn would have an impact on overall economic indicators. My delegation hopes that the special session will be an effective forum to reinvigorate efforts and pursue further initiatives to honour the commitments undertaken at Copenhagen, to reaffirm the humanitarian dimension of development and to curb Darwinian economic phenomena, whose tragedies are embodied in the deteriorating social situations in a number of countries and the marginalization of entire societies.

My country is fully convinced that States play a great role in activating social development at the local level and in creating an enabling environment, thus implementing the Copenhagen commitments by placing social development on a strong foundation of human rights, non-discrimination, pursuit of equal opportunities and the realization of social justice.

Jordan is doing its best, in cooperation with civil society institutions and through open dialogue with all competent authorities, to reinvigorate democratic development in the country by enhancing transparency, performance and political pluralism through appropriate legal infrastructures that provide opportunities for social integration and participation. Being aware of the importance of access to information, and by engaging in an ongoing policy dialogue with all sectors of society, we have opened the door to information flow through both the print media and the Internet, which is widely used. We have also adopted a policy of open, transnational and unrestricted visual mass media.

In dealing with its environment, Jordan has always been keen to pursue policies of dialogue and openness in order to activate peace and security, the pillars of socio-economic development in a region that has been suffering from terrible crises since the beginning of this century. Moreover, we continue to apply this approach through domestic legislation and policies, as demonstrated by our adherence to 18 human rights conventions. Despite our limited resources, we continue to endeavour to create a conducive environment for social integration.

For 50 years, Jordan has stood as a model. Through the enhancement of all its institutions and its commitment to provide education and health care for all, Jordan has made considerable achievements in a very short time. We have absorbed three large-scale forced migrations. My country offers refugees a humane social bases, granting them equal rights to ensure their full participation in society without prejudice to their protected rights, in accordance with the rule of law, international legality and their right to compensation and repatriation. The Government allocates more than $350 million annually from its budget for social services to refugees. This sum represents more than four times the contribution of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Thus, they experience socio-economic self-reliance despite the tremendous economic problems that Jordan faces, especially in terms of foreign debt.

The call for the mobilization of additional bilateral and multilateral resources for social development and the commitment to achieve the goal of allocating 0.7 per cent of gross national product to official development assistance falls within the declared and unrealized commitments of the Copenhagen Summit. As we approach the third millennium, we find ourselves facing a real challenge to the achievement of sustainable socio-economic growth, not growth based on temporary handouts and quick fixes. We are convinced, now more than ever, that the developing countries cannot achieve these social objectives alone. Thus, we hope that there will be an ongoing dialogue between the international financial institutions and the United Nations to enhance social development through structural changes and the creation of appropriate institutional mechanisms.

We also support the call by the World Bank to establish a comprehensive development framework that combines macroeconomic criteria with financial, structural and social considerations.

My delegation also calls for free access by developing countries to markets, and to membership in the World Trade Organization as soon as possible. It also calls for enhancing international, technical and administrative cooperation as a framework to activate efforts aimed at creating the necessary enabling international environment for social development and the real pursuit of the goal of integrating the economies of developing countries into the international economy. In this way, developing countries would realize self-sufficiency and real partnership as well as social security for all, so that mankind can live, as God Almighty intended, in dignity on Earth.

Mr. Chaouachi (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): As we meet to assess the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development — a very important item for us — we recognize that the Summit has led to the creation of a new concept of social development. Its recommendations were a serious point of departure in our quest for new and effective social development policies, and it set forth priorities that place the human being at the centre of development.

We have considered with interest the report of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, on the preparatory work for the follow-up to the Copenhagen Summit. We would like to thank him for the serious work done in preparing the report. This is a good sign for the success of the special session of the General Assembly to be held in June 2000 in Geneva.

We would also like to thank the Preparatory Committee for its efforts in the lead-up to that session. We also support all decisions taken in that regard. We would like to thank the Government of Switzerland for offering to host the special session of the General Assembly and for the steps taken to that end.

In assessing the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development, allow me to reaffirm the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, which the international community has endorsed. This assessment makes it possible to evaluate progress towards removing the obstacles to the full implementation of the Summit's recommendations. The first commitment of the Summit was to provide an enabling national and international environment for social development, poverty eradication and improved employment opportunities, in addition to providing basic facilities for education, health care and the advancement of women. We are increasingly convinced that the growing globalization that marks the end of this century and encompasses all aspects of life has some negative elements; and unless they are contained, the effect would be an increasing imbalance in international relations and in development processes. Therefore, the international community is called upon to firmly and resolutely meet the challenges of globalization and to define approaches that would create the balance required to give a human face to development, as the Secretary-General has said in many statements and in the latest report of the United Nations Development Programme.

We would like to voice our concern here that despite the efforts being made, official development assistance still has not attained the goal of 0.7 per cent of gross national product. Thus, this duty of international solidarity, which should govern relations among peoples, has not been met. The World Summit for Social Development made poverty eradication one of its priorities. Here we reiterate the appeal made by the President of the Republic, Mr. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, to all leaders and international institutions and United Nations bodies for the establishment of a world solidarity fund that would collect contributions and donations to combat poverty and ensure development in the most disadvantaged areas, in particular in the least developed countries, which suffer from many crises.

Tunisia is seeking to rally support for this humanitarian project so that the international community can be in step with the Copenhagen recommendations and commitments. Tunisian experience in the area of social development is recounted in the national report that we submitted in accordance with the resolution of the Preparatory Committee that was adopted at the organizational session in May 1998. In accordance with global humanitarian guidelines, we have given greater priority to social development through a global development policy, backed up by the following concepts: correlation of economic and social dimensions in a way that would comprehensively consolidate human rights; increasing the role of civil society; the need to provide protection for everyone, along with decent living conditions, equal opportunity, non-exclusion, and non-marginalization; the need to prevent, contain, and overcome social ills; the need to increase and improve social care and services for the poorest sectors; the need to provide support for the role of women and, hence, the role of the family, given their importance for social stability and the development of society; and the need to strengthen solidarity between communities and generations through environmental protection programmes that would create conditions conducive to sustainable development.

Finally, we hope that the special session will live up to our expectations.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.